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AUTHOR McKinley, DonnaIrene
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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a pilot project designed to facilitate coordination among Chapter 1, Pennsylvania Special Education, and Pennsylvania Regular Education services, with the goal of providing a more integrated support system for students. The project, named C.H.A.P. (for Chapter 1 Special Education Helping At-risk Programs), served 282 educators and 105 students. Its most prominent aspects during the 1991-1992 school year were classroom demonstrations, program improvement, and a special collaborative project. The on-site classroom demonstrations illustrated techniques in teaching oral reading fluency, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, prewriting activities, study skills, following directions, and individualization. Program improvement was effected by phone consultations and program sessions on cooperative teacher planning, team teaching, and alignment with regular education. A specific 6-week project attempted to assist a second grade teacher working with 15 students at risk of failure in her homogeneously grouped reading class. The project focused on developing teaching strategies that would maximize the students' academically engaged time. Substantial progress in students' skills in word recognition, word meaning, and reading fluency were reported. (DB)

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by DonnaIrene McKinley

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Pennsylvania's Collaboration Rationale

Much of the current research on improving educational practice speaks to the need for collaboration, cooperation, and inclusion. In the world of the educator, isolation and individual professional practice are the norm while team decision making, professional collaboration, and joint planning are the exception. As we develop new approaches to deal with students who are experiencing difficulties academically, personally or interpersonally, it is critical that we have the best possible information reviewed through as many different perceptions or frameworks as possible.

In July of 1990, the revised Pennsylvania Special Education Regulations and Standards included Instructional Support for grades Kindergarten through Sixth grade to be in place in all school districts within the state by the year 1995. Instructional Support is available for any student considered "at-risk" and includes five components; collaboration, curriculum based assessment, instructional adaptations, effective communication patterns, and student life skills.

Collaboration provides a framework for professionals to work together in groups, to cooperatively solve problems related to their students, to help one another discover and explore new ways of working, and to take collective responsibility for what happens in the school.

Teachers who work with other teachers develop a new view of their school. They look forward to being supported in looking at the classroom environment, instructional methods, the curriculum, the text and the opportunities for student learning to ensure their student's success.

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The Birth of C.H.A.P.

The State of Pennsylvania Special Education Director, Dr. James Tucker, and the Federal Programs Director, Mr. James Sheffer, met during the summer of 1991 to discuss how their two programs might work together in order to provide a more integrated support system for students in Pennsylvania who are at-risk. Their meeting led to the support of a pilot project that would provide technical assistance to interested school districts within the western third of the state for the 91-92 school year. The pilot project office was located in the Western Instructional Support Center, a federally-funded, state-supported project and one of three centers within the Instructional Support System of Pennsylvania. The center provided the services of a part-time Instructional Support Material Specialist for the coordination of this project.

The coordinator worked with a regional Federal Programs Coordinator to become familiar with Chapter 1 regulations and to establish a collaborative relationship between Chapter 1 and Special Education. The pilot project was named C.H.A.P. (Chapter 1 & Special Education **H**elping **A**t-risk **P**rograms). The goal was to facilitate program coordination among Chapter 1, Special Education, and Regular Education services. The objectives of the project were:

1) to schedule van visits with resource material that would be demonstrated for use in the classroom,
2) to provide individualized bibliographic listing of resource material from the Western Instructional Support Center's 80,000 piece library,
3) to provide on-site classroom demonstrations,
4) to provide supplemental inservices for program improvement, and
5) to respond to client phone requests.

Classroom demonstrations, program improvement, and a special collaborative project were the most prominent aspects of C.H.A.P. during the 91-92 school year.

Classroom Demonstrations

C.H.A.P. brought together Chapter 1, Regular, and Special Educators interested in coordinating educational services. As an introduction to collaboration, the coordinator provided on-site classroom demonstrations on oral reading fluency techniques, comprehension, vocabulary development, prewriting activities, study skills, following directions, and individualization. Each demonstration, which lasted 1 1/2 hours, included classroom management techniques. The demonstrations were done in subject or content areas in the regular classroom and utilized existing classroom materials as much as possible. After the demonstration, Chapter 1, Special, and Regular Educators participated in a follow-up question and answer period on any of the strategies demonstrated. Participants were asked to examine their current programs and were encouraged to develop a plan to work collaboratively. In the afternoon, the educators were challenged to take familiar, successful strategies or techniques they used in small groups or one on one settings and adapt them for use within a regular classroom setting. This activity emphasized the need for school programs to be more proactive rather than reactive to student difficulties in school.

Program Improvement

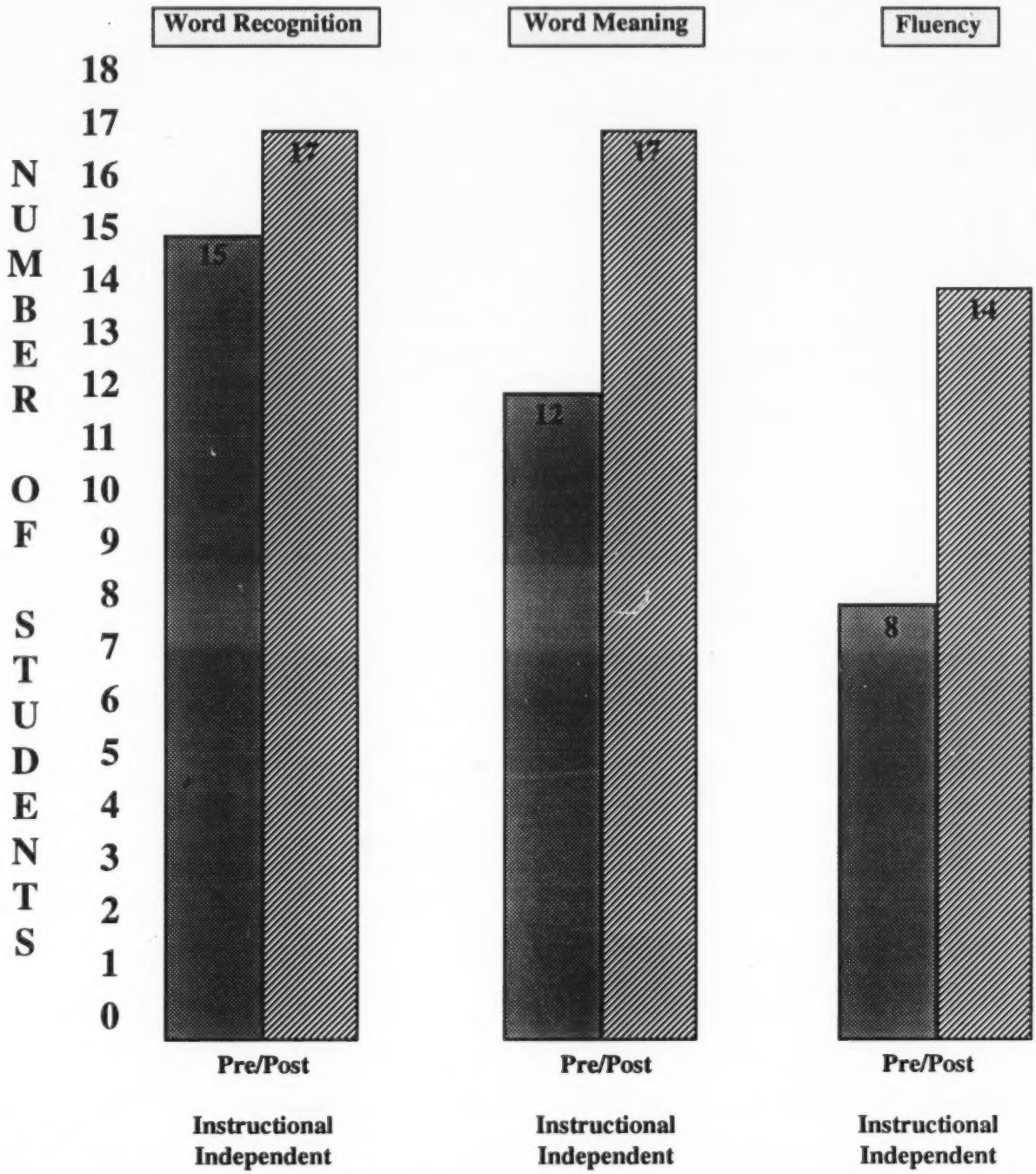
Follow-up was essential in order to provide the technical assistance requested by districts to implement an integrated support system. Phone consultations and a one day follow-up were provided. Each follow-up session was designed to meet the unique needs of the school district. Frequently, the C.H.A.P. coordinator was able to facilitate better communication between School District Administration and the practicing educator. Examples of program improvement sessions requested by districts included cooperative teacher planning, team teaching and, alignment with regular education. Collaborative strategies between Chapter 1 and Regular educators was one of the most frequently requested sessions. During informal work sessions, participants practiced active listening skills and role played realistic senarios that would enhance their ability to work together.

Project Team-UP!

In January, the C.H.A.P. coordinator was approached by a Chapter 1 teacher to assist a second grade teacher concerned about 15 students who were at-risk for failure in her homogeneously grouped reading class. Project Team-Up was a special six week commitment by the C.H.A.P. coordinator, the Chapter 1 teacher, the Support Teacher (a previous Special Education Teacher), and the classroom teacher. Each professional was recognized for their area of expertise. The team spent the first day collaboratively planning the process which included pre/post assessment, classroom management, the roles of all the educators involved, and the development of teaching strategies that would maximize the student's academically-engaged time. The C.H.A.P. coordinator modeled and adapted the strategies in the beginning of the project for the other educators. The developed strategies were done for 15 minutes daily. When they felt comfortable, the Chapter 1, Support Teacher, and classroom teacher took over demonstrating the strategies. After two weeks, the Support Teacher and C.H.A.P. coordinator reduced their direct involvement. The Chapter 1 teacher and classroom teacher continued the strategies for four weeks. The Chapter 1 teacher remained in close contact with the C.H.A.P. coordinator to report on the student progress, to ask questions that would arise from the classroom teacher, and to establish the bridge between classroom and consultant.

Prior to the project's intervention, the classroom teacher described these students as having poor word recognition, word meaning, and oral reading fluency skills. These three areas were pre/post measured during the project (see graph). The classroom teacher was impressed by her students' accomplishments over the six week period. She saw students more actively involved in learning and more interested in reading. The Speech therapist commented on the differences she noticed in the students. The teacher felt energized by the process, wanting to invite parents and other teachers into her classroom, eagerly searching for new ideas to incorporate into her class, and adapting her entire reading period so that students experienced more actively engaged time.

18 SECOND GRADERS (15 Qualify for Chapter 1)
6 Week Pre/Post Test Results



Project Team-Up!
A daily fifteen minute active instruction technique

C.H.A.P. Results

C.H.A.P. serviced 282 educators, and 105 students between the months of September and May, 1992. These results were achieved by approximately 20 hours a week by a part-time professional. As with any service that involves outside technical assistance, the C.H.A.P. coordinator found that although follow-up services were the most difficult to provide, they were essential to facilitate change. Most of the educators enjoyed the in-classroom demonstrations, understood the strategies demonstrated, but had difficulty knowing how or where to begin working together with other educators. Collaboration is not a skill developed during one inservice session. Collaboration expands through the use of guided practice, which must not be overlooked when developing change within a system. Developing an integrated program, requires visible administrative support. One crucial way to provide such support is to arrange duty free time for educators to meet and to collaboratively plan how their programs can work together. All of these factors help to facilitate a more integrated support system for students and assist schools to become schools for success.

DonnaIrene McKinley served as the coordinator of C.H.A.P. and Project Team-Up. She brought 15 years experience in Special and Regular Education to this endeavor. C.H.A.P.'s success is attributed to her training in collaboration and willingness to model effective in-classroom strategies. She is an Instructional Support Material Specialist with the Western Instructional Support Center, 5347 Wm. Flynn Hwy., Rt. 8, Gibsonia, PA 15044 1-800-446-5607 exy 219.